



# Seward Peninsula

## Watchable Wildlife

Travel to the Seward Peninsula starts with a flight to Nome, a town on the southwest coast of the peninsula. Pick a direction to travel out of town, and find yourself in unique and expansive terrain. Journey northwest into the Kigluaik Mountains, head north along the Nome River into tundra, or travel east from Nome and parallel coastal beaches and the sand spit and lagoons of Safety Sound. Whichever way you go, keep your eyes open for a wide variety of birds.



Laura Cadzow, BLM

**Habitats** Arctic tundra | Alpine tundra | Boreal Forest | Shrubland | Riverine/riparian | Freshwater lakes/ponds

### Species to See



Kristine Sowl, USFWS

**Bristle-thighed curlew** - The Seward Peninsula is one of the main breeding areas for the bristle-thighed curlew. Distinguished by their long down-curving beaks, these shorebirds nest in the inland tundra, often placing their nests under the protection of dwarf willow shrubs. In the fall, they fly 2,500 miles non-stop to islands in the South Pacific.



Brian Ubelaker, BLM

**Muskox** - You could encounter one of these 800-pound herbivores right in the town of Nome! They thrive eating the abundant sedges, wildflowers, and grasses of the tundra. But beware, males are aggressive during the rut. Bulls charge at one another from 50 yards away, colliding squarely on their helmet-like horns. They repeat this battle until one bull runs away.



Ryan Hagerty, USFWS

**Dolly Varden** - Each spring adult Dolly Varden on the Seward Peninsula migrate from freshwater streams to the ocean to feed, only to return in the fall. After completing this journey multiple times, they return to the same area they were born to spawn. Dolly Varden can grow to lengths of 30 inches and weigh 30 pounds.



Steve Hillebrand, USFWS

**Bluethroat** - In North America, the tundra of Seward Peninsula is one of the best locations to see this small Eurasian bird. Named for the brilliant blue throat patch on the males, bluethroats spend their summers breeding in Alaska and then fly to southeast Asia for winter. Look for the brightly colored males making territorial displays, singing and spiraling in the air.



- Brown bear
- Black bear
- Canada lynx
- Coyote
- Snowshoe hare
- Porcupine
- Boreal chickadee
- Great horned owl
- Hermit thrush
- Northern wheatear
- Ruby-crowned kinglet
- Slate-colored junco
- Spruce grouse
- Yellow-rumped warbler



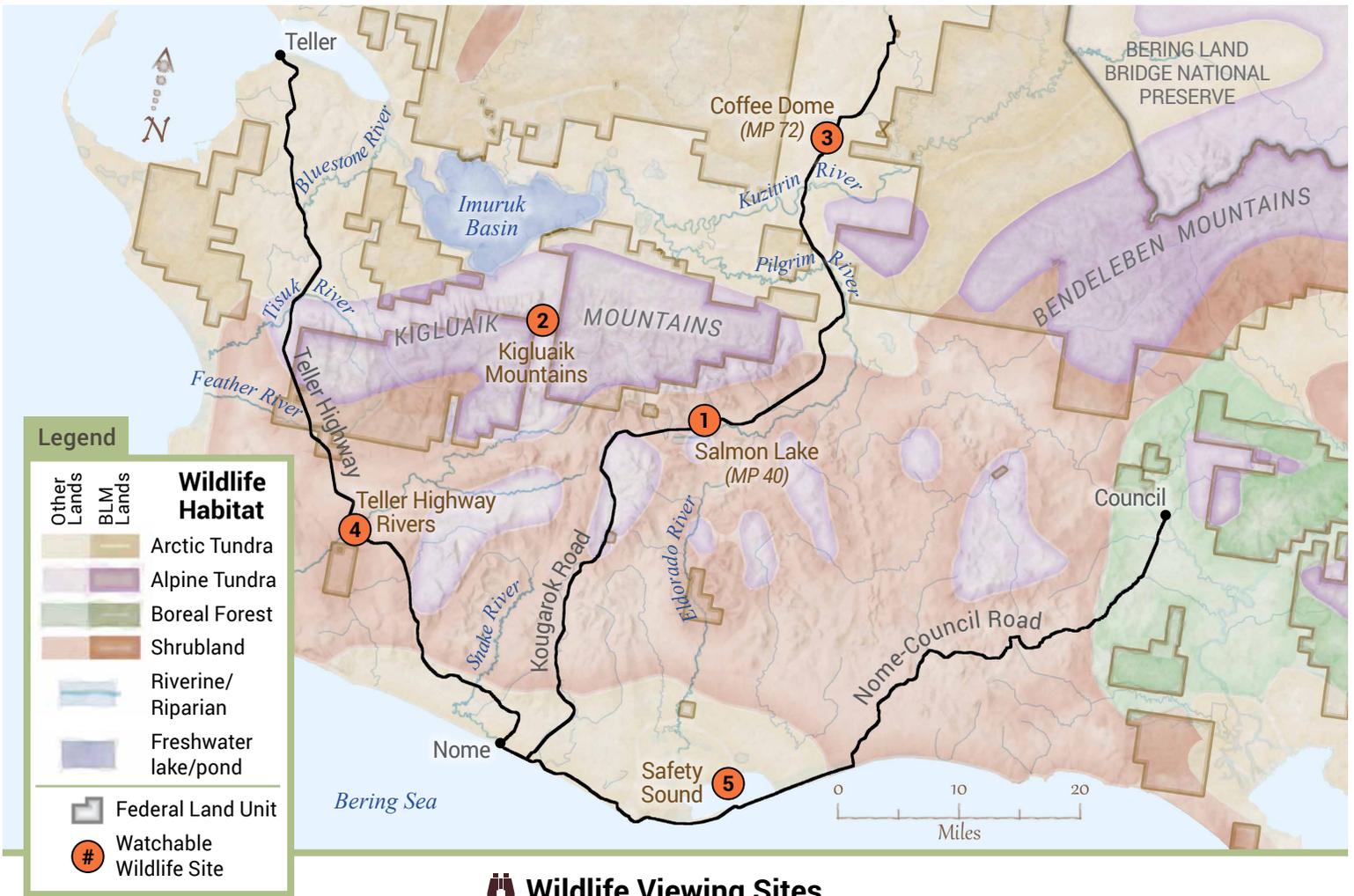
### Wildlife Viewing Tips

Unlike many locations in rural Alaska, the Seward Peninsula has a well-developed road system. Roads are usually in good condition, but be prepared for washouts and no services outside of Nome.

Peak season for viewing the area's unique and abundant migratory birds is late May to early July.

### Other Resources

[ADF&G Wildlife Viewing Guide](#) | [Bird list for Nome, Alaska](#)



## Wildlife Viewing Sites

**Kougatok Road** - Winding for about 86 miles, this road crosses streams, passes through the sharp peaks of the Kigluaik Range, and travels into glacially carved valleys.

- 1 **Salmon Lake** - Forty miles north of Nome, Salmon Lake is a favorite spot for picnics and camping. Spend time watching red-throated loon, long-tailed duck, and red-necked grebe. Red fox and brown bears come to feed on spawned-out red salmon.
- 2 **Kigluaik Mountains** - Get off the road and hike in the expansive tundra hills and jagged rocky peaks of this mountain range. Brown bears and ground squirrels roam the hills and valleys, while the mountain lakes are home to Arctic char.
- 3 **Coffee Dome** - About 72 miles up the road to the east is Coffee Dome, a common nesting area for bristle-thighed curlew. Hike off the road to see this elusive bird.

**Teller Highway** - Head northwest out of Nome into expansive tundra with a backdrop of the Bering Sea.

- 4 **Teller Highway Rivers: Snake, Sinuk, Feather, Tisuk, and Bluestone** - River crossings provide opportunities for viewing aquatic and riparian wildlife, such as salmon and American dippers. Scan the hillsides nearby for muskox and nesting American and Pacific golden-plovers.

**Nome-Council Road** - This 72-mile road takes you east through every habitat type on the Seward Peninsula, reaching the western edge of Alaska's boreal forest.

- 5 **Safety Sound** - The lagoon and the coastal grasslands surrounding it provide feeding, breeding, cover, and nesting space for many species. Look for black brant and common eider nests in meadows, all five North American loon species, and Arctic terns.

## Other Areas within the BLM Field Office

**Innoko River Bottoms** - Located in the floodplains of the Yukon and Innoko Rivers, this wetland-rich area is important breeding and nesting habitat for waterfowl. Many moose also live here and re-introduced wood bison roam the grassland-like areas.

**Squirrel River Valley** - Located northeast of Kotzebue, a chartered flight to this remote valley rewards you with opportunities to view brown bear, moose, and the fall migration of the Western Arctic caribou herd, the largest herd in Alaska.

**Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River** - The Unalakleet River flows from the Nulato Hills across a broad expanse of tundra to the coastal village of Unalakleet. Fly to Unalakleet, and float the river to see beavers, bears, moose, and waterfowl.